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TRAIN THE TRAINER

**Training Articles for Youth
Offering Training Programs in CAP Centres**



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Featured Article

How to Set Objectives for a CAP Project: An Overview

[Course Development & Planning](#)

How to Set Objectives for a CAP Project: An Overview

Once you have a good understanding of CAP and your role in the program, you will need to set some objectives for your term of employment. If your employer has already outlined your objectives, you may not need to set your own.

What is an Objective?

An objective is a specific step that helps you achieve a goal. Setting objectives is not a one-time project and actually requires a process of monitoring, revision and improvement. The starting point in setting objectives is always a clear understanding of yourself and your CAP Centre.

As a CAP worker, your goal is to provide the public with computer training and easy, affordable access to online information.

Although each CAP Centre will be unique, the OLA has devised a four-stage ranking system for CAP Centres, outlining their current stage, their goals (which is to get to the next stage) and the corresponding Youth Worker responsibilities. Print the following stages to help you set objectives in your centre:

- [Stage One](#)
- [Stage Two](#)
- [Stage Three](#)
- [Stage Four](#)

Setting Good Objectives: The First Step

When setting objectives, you need to ask yourself, "What do I need to do in order to achieve my goal?" The answer(s) to that question will be your objective(s).

Successful objectives need to be clear, measurable and they must follow a timeline. When setting objectives, you should try to address the following areas:

- **Students/Clients** – Who are they and what do they want; increasing client satisfaction, choice, and learning.
- **Internal Goals & Objectives** – Increasing the number of courses developed or training provided; increasing training statistics.
- **Learning & Growth** – Increasing access to services, knowledge and online sources, improving access to services; designing new and creative ways to provide and/or to access the services.

Setting Clear Objectives: Follow the SMART Principle

The SMART principle is a popular device used for setting goals and objectives. Essentially, and according to SMART, your objectives must be:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Realistic
- Timely

Defining Your Objectives the SMART Way!

To define your objectives according to the SMART principle then, you will need to attach numbers and timelines to actions that will help you attain your goal. For instance, your "goal" is to improve your training statistics. One of your "objectives" will be to train at least 2-12% of your community's population. Another goal may be to diversify the training projects you currently offer. Your objective, then, may be to design, develop and write a Web design workshop by November 30, 2004 (This objective would then be broken down into even smaller steps).

Why do You Need to Set Objectives?

You've undoubtedly heard the expression that those who, "fail to plan, plan to fail." Well, that's what setting objectives is all about: planning. Take some time to think about what projects you would like to complete during your term as a CAP Worker; brainstorm with your supervisor; brainstorm with yourself and a piece of paper. And then, most importantly, sit down and plan it out – because, truthfully, preparation really is half the battle.

Last, but not Least...

Measure your results. In order to analyze the results of your efforts, you will need to take some kind of measurements, i.e. surveys, statistics. You should provide anonymous survey forms for your clients to complete at the end of their programs, so that you can acquire statistical information about the age and sex range of your clients as well as where they heard about the program and whether or not they would take to program again, etc.

Featured Article

Lesson Plan Basics

[Course Development & Planning](#)

Lesson Plan Basics

A lesson plan is an easy-to-use organizational tool that instructors use to help organize points of learning for an individual training session. On a larger scale, a lesson plan also helps to manage short and long-term goals, as each lesson meets or becomes a small step towards an objective. See "How to Set Objectives" for more information...

More Specifically...

A good lesson plan:

- keeps you organized and on topic
- provides continuity between training sessions
- monitors student goals and progress
- helps you set realistic timelines

Components of a Good Lesson Plan

Every lesson plan should include activities that aid the student's learning in the subject. You should begin with a session "objective," include fun, interesting activities, a timeline and any materials needed to complement your training.

1. **Objective:** The first part of any lesson plan should contain a learning objective. Ask yourself what you would like the student to learn during the session. An example of a learning objective could be "to learn how to log on to the Internet and visit a website using the address bar and hyperlinks" or "to learn how to use a search engine" or "to practice using the browser's toolbar" (back, forward, stop, refresh, etc.).

Your objective will depend on the student's overall learning goal and how long your training session will be. The above objectives would work toward the goal: "To learn how to use the Internet effectively." For instance, if your student wanted to achieve this goal in 3 sessions, each of the objectives in the above paragraph could form one complete lesson.

- **GOAL:** To learn how to use the Internet effectively.
- **Objective 1:** Access the Internet and visit sites using the Address Bar and Hyperlinks.
- **Objective 2:** Learn how to use a search engine.
- **Objective 3:** Practice using the Browser's toolbar(s).

2. **Activities & Tasks:** If we use the above objective, "to use the browser's toolbar," we can break it down into teachable tasks:

- Back/Forward Buttons
- Stop/Refresh Buttons
- Home (and how to change your homepage)
- Favorites Folder (adding and organizing)

3. **Timeline:** Include an amount of time you will spend on each activity.

4. **Materials:** Make a list of materials you will require (whether already created or to be developed).

Tips for Writing a Good Lesson Plan

Your lesson activities should not be too easy; nor should they be too difficult. It may be a good idea to include a small break in the middle of each lesson, just to get up and stretch or walk around. If you notice that the student is moving very quickly or slowly through the lesson's activities, try to "go with the flow." Be flexible and use the lesson plan as a guide. If the student needs more or less time, accommodate them. You can simply adjust any lesson plans that come after your current one so that they are more tailored to each student.

Some experts suggest that it is best to draft your "next" lesson plan for the student immediately following the current training session when the details from the session are fresh in your mind. Every lesson plan should contain:

- Warm-up
- Review of previous lesson
- Brief Overview
- Instructor Presentation and Student Activities
- Summary

[Click here to download a copy of a 2-hour lesson plan.](http://www.youthontario.net/trainer/lessonplan.doc) < <http://www.youthontario.net/trainer/lessonplan.doc> >

Featured Article

Assessment & Evaluation: An Overview

[Assessment & Evaluation](#)

Assessment & Evaluation: An Overview

A good trainer employs assessment as part of his or her training program. Discover the difference between assessment and evaluation and learn tips for including various levels of assessment in your current training program.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is a necessary part of any training program. Assessment helps us learn what our learners already know, what they would like to know, and how well they are learning the subject at hand. It is important to assess your learner's abilities early on as this assessment will provide a yardstick against which you will measure any and all progress made. Without an initial assessment of the learner's abilities, how will you know if they are improving?

Good assessment answers the following questions:

- What skills does the learner already possess?
- What skills would the learner like to acquire?
- How does the learner plan to use the skills he or she has learned?
- How will these newly learned skills affect the learner's daily life?
- How well is the learner learning the material?
- Does the learner need to learn at a different pace?
- Does the learner have special learning needs?
- How much has the learner learned and how much more training is required until he or she reaches the ultimate learning goal?

Additional questions to answer may be:

- What is the objective of this training session/course?
- Does the learner have all the necessary prerequisites for the course?
- How well am I, the instructor, teaching the material? Do I need to change or improve my teaching style?

A good trainer will employ assessment strategies regularly. The first assessment is usually performed before the training session even begins during the initial contact with the learner. The trainer ascertains the learner's current skills as well as his or her needs. The second assessment is done at the beginning of the first training session. As the trainer can observe the learner's actual performance, he or she will gain a better impression of the learner's abilities.

A good trainer does not cease assessing his or her learner's skills and abilities after the first introduction. A good trainer continues to assess the learner's performance during each training session and monitors improvement, progress and/or difficulties.

There are two kinds of broad assessment:

- **Formal Assessment**
Formal assessment is usually done through the use of standardized testing. These tests may be given in the form of "pre-tests" where the learner answers questions prepared for the purpose of "placing" students in level-specific training sessions or courses.
- **Informal Assessment**
Informal assessment is usually conducted through questioning and listening. The trainer asks unobtrusive open-ended questions (such as those listed above) and listens as the learner answers them. A trainer might also distribute a short and simple survey with very brief questions that the learner answers and then submits to the trainer (see above). Informal assessment can also be done simply by observing a learner's performance during hands-on exercises.

EVALUATION

Whereas assessment gives a profile of the learner's skills and abilities, **evaluation** is the process of judging or applying a grade to the learner's performance. Although evaluation is frequently used as a way to assess students' abilities and skills, it is not actually a necessary part of a CAP training program. CAP Trainers may never need to attach grades to their learners' performances. As we saw above, there are many ways to assess a learner's performance without "evaluating" them.

Having said that, however, **course evaluation forms** completed by learners can be excellent tools for trainers to assess their own performances. [Download the CAP Manual – Print Pack](#) and use the Evaluation Sheet to distribute to your learners after each course to determine the course's weaknesses and strengths, as well as your own.

Featured Article

Styles of Learning

[Methods of Instruction](#)

Styles of Learning

*Adults tend to learn in three different ways: by seeing, by hearing and by doing. Each learner will probably have a primary and secondary style of learning that is necessary to grasp any new subject. Some will simply have a preferred style of learning. Although it may be helpful to know which style of learning is your learner's preferred style, it is not actually necessary. Most learners prefer courses that **incorporate all three styles of learning** in the curriculum.*

VISUAL LEARNER

Visual learners learn by seeing. They prefer to watch someone perform the task or to read handouts, manuals, instructions, etc. A visual learner will show up to a training session with pen and paper in hand ready to write down everything the trainer says. They will not want to listen a trainer's description of how something works; they will want to see it done. The visual learner will have trouble following along with a trainer's lecture and may seem distracted by any movement in the classroom.

In order to help the visual learners in the course, include handouts, diagrams and offer one-on-one demonstrations at each cubicle whenever possible.

AUDITORY LEARNER

Auditory learners learn by hearing. They prefer to sit and listen to a lecture, discussion, presentation, etc. An auditory learner prefers to participate in group discussions and study groups. They also like to receive verbal instruction and may have difficulty understanding written instructions. The auditory learner will have trouble sorting through handouts and watching the trainer demonstrate tasks.

In order to help the auditory learners in the course, include informal lectures and group discussion.

KINESTHETIC-TACTILE LEARNER

Kinesthetic-tactile learners learn by doing and/or touching. They prefer to "do" what the trainer is describing and may not find discussion or handouts very helpful. The kinesthetic-tactile learner prefers to engage in activities and needs to "get right in there" and start practicing the task at hand.

In order to help the kinesthetic-tactile learners in the course, include several activities in your lesson plan.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

So, how do you accommodate all three types of learners? It's easier than you might think. Simply include handouts, diagrams, demonstrations, brief periods of oral explanation and/or class discussion, as well as a few to several activities throughout the lesson.

References

Training Strategies: Assessing Needs & Skills. Webjunction.org <www.webjunction.org>



Featured Article

Becoming a Reflective Teacher

[Reflective Teaching](#)

Becoming a Reflective Teacher

Teaching computer skills to novice computer users can be challenging. Learn how you can improve your training/teaching skills by becoming a Reflective Teacher.

Introduction

You think it will be fun. You've developed a cool program and designed interesting course materials. You have it all planned and are well-prepared. But then something goes wrong. One of your students doesn't understand the material and is holding up the rest of the class. The students who do understand become bored and begin talking amongst themselves. You respond with frustrated silence, all of your enthusiasm lost. Suddenly, your perfect program is ruined all because of a few annoying students!

But is that really true? Was the outcome completely out of your hands or did you play a role in your classroom's Cyber-Meltdown? Could you have done anything to prevent the situation from occurring? Could you have improved it after the first few moments of conflict? Were there warning signs? If it happened again, what could you do differently?

By asking these questions, you are becoming a Reflective Teacher. A Reflective Teacher "reflects" on her teaching experiences by recalling a specific event, detailing an account of what transpired, and then reviewing her performance by asking questions and making honest, even critical, observations of her own training style, reactions, etc.

Why Bother?

The purpose of reflective teaching is to improve your training skills by reflecting on your own strengths and weaknesses. By improving your training skills you will feel more confident in the classroom and, ultimately, you will obtain more satisfaction from your work experiences. Reflection is an important part of your professional development as a computer technology trainer.

Often, it is not enough simply to practice your training skills. Practicing the same skills over and over again will not increase your "awareness" of your own teaching style and habits. If you want to make truly meaningful changes in the way you approach your work, you must make deep, personal observations about yourself and apply what you learn to your future training experiences.

Journaling: A Reflective Teacher's Technique

One of the most common methods used to reflect upon our own teaching styles is through the use of journals. A journal is often a safe place where we write down our deepest, most personal thoughts. It makes sense, then, that we use a journal to reflect on our own performances in the classroom. Criticism can be painful, whether it comes from others or ourselves.

Having a safe place to reflect on your abilities, strengths, weaknesses and faults allows you to be open, honest, even candid about yourself.

After each of your training sessions, and while the experience is still fresh in your mind, take out your journal and answer the following questions:

- **What** did you hope to get out of the session?
- **What** actually happened during the session?
- **How** do you feel about what happened during the session?
- **Do** you think the session was generally positive or negative?
- **What** worked really well during the session? What didn't?
- **Did** something unpleasant happen? How did you respond?
- **How** could you change the way you approached or responded to the experience?
- **How** would you like to approach the next session?

Progress Over Time

It is more than likely that you will not see immediate results. Reflective teaching takes time and patience. Although you might be able to see that different approaches might work better you won't always be able to implement them. Sometimes a specific situation won't provide the opportunity to change. Other times, you will automatically respond with your typical training style, whether good or bad. That is okay. Change takes time. After you have written in your journal for several months, you will start to notice that you are making small changes. After a year, you will read through your initial entries and be amazed at the improvements you have made. You may even laugh at your past failings. When that happens, you will know that you have truly become a better, more effective teacher.

References

Richards, Jack C. Towards Reflective Teaching. <http://www.tttjournal.co.uk/uploads/File/back_articles/Towards_Reflective_Teaching.pdf>

Featured Article

Who is a Difficult Student/Learner?

[The Difficult Student](#)

Who is a Difficult Student/Learner?

No two difficult students are exactly alike. Difficult students come in many forms, each with his or her own personality styles and "baggage." As such, no single strategy will work for all students.

A Difficult Student: A Definition

A trainer usually recognizes a difficult student or learner when the student's behaviour begins to annoy, frustrate or anger the trainer. But in order to be labeled a "difficult" student, the learner should be doing something more than just annoying the teacher. The student's behaviour or attitude must be preventing the student, and/or the other students in the class, from learning the class material. This behaviour can be demonstrated in many ways. The behaviour may be:

- **disruptive**, distracting the other students or preventing the trainer from teaching the class material
- **self-sabotaging**, preventing the student from learning due to low self-confidence and/or fears of embarrassment or failure
- **frustrating**, both to the student and trainer alike, causing both to label a challenging behaviour "difficult" when the student may simply require special-needs training

Dealing with a Difficult Student

Since each student's difficult behaviour will be caused by different factors thereby presenting itself in different forms, the trainer will need to employ several different strategies, depending on the exhibited behaviour.

Having said that, however, there are a few general strategies that a trainer can use to help handle any difficult situation:

- **Do** be patient, kind, empathetic and understanding.
- **Don't** ignore the behaviour or wait too long to address it. The longer you wait, the more impatient you will be. This will increase the likelihood of an "inappropriate" response or reaction from you.
- **Do** use your students' names. This will encourage students to behave more responsibly, as they no longer feel the freedom of anonymity. People, in general, are less likely to behave inappropriately where they feel "known" or "seen." It will also make the insecure students feel more accepted.
- **Don't** take the behaviour personally. A person's behaviour is fairly constant so the chances that the behaviour is caused solely because of you is slim to none. If you take it personally you run the danger of becoming defensive and responding "emotionally" and/or inappropriately.

(For more situation-specific strategies, read below.)

Types of Difficult Students

As mentioned above, there are many types of difficult students, each requiring a specific strategy with which to control the difficult behaviour. Read the articles below for more situation-specific tips on dealing with difficult students:

- [Special-Needs Learners](#)
- [Disruptive Learners](#)
- [Distracted Learners](#)

The Difficult Adult Learner: Special Circumstances

Many online and print resources dealing with difficult students behaviours offer advice to teachers who are teaching grade school students. But can we compare a school-aged learner with an adult learner? After all, if little Johnny acts up in class the teacher can always send him to the principal's office for scolding and punishment. If an adult learner who registers for a free computer training course is posing problems, how can we use the same strategy? Firstly, we cannot "punish" adult learners; they are to be treated respectfully at all times. We cannot talk reproachfully to adult learners; they are actually "purchasing" our services and should be treated as we would treat any other "customer."

Where does that leave the trainer? Well, the trainer must use excellent communication skills and extreme patience at all times. This is often easier said than done when one is confronted with a difficult, disruptive student who shows no respect in return. If you know that you simply are unable to handle a particular student or situation, it may be in your best interest to inform your supervisor of the problem. It is better to ask for help than to go it alone and risk offending or alienating a patron.

References

Dealing with Monopolizing, Distracting and Withdrawing Behaviours. The Center for Teaching Excellence <<http://www.lcc.edu/cte/resources/teachingettes/monopolizingstudents.html>>
Training Strategies: Assessing Needs & Skills. Webjunction.org <www.webjunction.org>

Featured Article

Special-Needs Learners

[The Difficult Student](#)

Special-Needs Learners

*Special-Needs learners often have special needs that are largely beyond their control. Unfortunately, these special needs often result in the same interruptions and distractions that are caused by disruptive students. These learners often require **one-on-one attention** that monopolizes the trainer's time, holding back the other students in the class.*

The Slow Learner

Slow Learners are very capable of learning, but they need more repetition than other learners. They require patience and do better in shorter training sessions that focus on only one or two new tasks. Although seniors are not technically "slow learners," the biological changes in their brains can make it more difficult to retain newly learned skills. As with slow learners, many seniors will require short, repetitive training sessions that may fail to challenge the other learners in your class.

The ESL Learner

The ESL Learner is at a significant disadvantage as he or she is unfamiliar with the English language. Can you imagine learning how to use the computer if the instructor were teaching it in Chinese? This would be more frustrating than most of us can imagine. As with slow learners, the ESL student will require patience on the part of the trainer. However, many ESL Learners are actually very bright, intelligent and fast learners. It is because of miscommunication that they are often labeled "slow." Demonstrations may prove very beneficial with this learner because the ESL learner doesn't need to understand the language but can simply mimic what you have just done.

The Unsure Newbie

Unsure Newbies are nervous and insecure. They feel out of their depth and are worried about appearing incapable. As such, they often become their own worst nightmares. They profess that they are "stupid" and "just don't get it," both as an insecure admission and a way to deflect possible judgement from other students. This is the same technique used by people with unattractive features who make a joke about it before it can be turned into an insult. Unsure newbies, although they can appear eager, are often harbouring doubts about their own abilities. Sadly these doubts usually become a self-fulfilling prophecy as they sabotage their learning experiences.

The Learning-Disabled Learner

A learner with a learning disability may be the toughest, but most rewarding, student a trainer encounters. They may require special equipment or special coloured paper; they may need handouts designed a particular way; they will undoubtedly require more one-on-one time with the trainer. But they are often the most eager learners, trying their best to overcome their disabilities.

It will probably be in your best interest to offer one-on-one training to a learning-disabled learner, depending on the severity of the learning disability. Don't be afraid to discuss this with the learner. Some learning-disabled learners may be quite capable of learning in a group; others may find it too intimidating. They will probably provide the special materials they need. Be open to the experience and see if you can't find a way to work it out. For those students that you just can't seem to help, see the final strategy listed below.

Strategies for Dealing with Special-Needs Learners

Most of these strategies will work with all types of special-needs learners:

- If possible, use handouts and exercises that use diagrams and offer a wide range of skill levels, allowing slower learners to focus on the initial exercises while faster learners advance to more challenging exercises.
- Have extra exercises available for students who would like to move on to more challenging exercises.
- Ensure that you don't try and cram too many topics into the lesson plan.
- Offer courses in levels, i.e. Internet Skills I, II, and III. Place the slower learners in the first two classes until they are comfortable enough to move on to the higher levels.
- If you don't have the time to develop several courses, find a volunteer to spend one-on-one time with the slower students in your sessions – help an Ontario high school student get in their required volunteer hours!
- Applaud even the smallest successes. When students feel as if they are falling behind they can become very frustrated, and ready to give up. Ensure them that they are doing well.
- Keep it light. Don't worry if you don't complete every last topic on your lesson plan.
- Offer one-on-one sessions for the special-needs students and bypass all the group stuff.
- If you have an ESL or Learning-Disabled Learner that you just can't seem to help, investigate other options for him/her. See if the local library has an ESL tutoring program or if there's a resource centre nearby for students with special needs. Pass on this valuable information to the learner.

References

Dealing with Monopolizing, Distracting and Withdrawing Behaviours. The Center for Teaching Excellence <<http://www.lcc.edu/cte/resources/teachingettes/monopolizingstudents.html>>
Training Strategies: Assessing Needs & Skills. Webjunction.org <www.webjunction.org>

Featured Article

Disruptive Learners Part I: The Interrupter & Co-Pilot

The Difficult Student

Disruptive Learners Part I: The Interrupter & Co-Pilot

Disruptive learners interrupt the flow of the class and distract both the instructor and other students. There are four main types of disruptive learners: the Interrupter, the Co-pilot, the Class Clown and the Chatterbox.

The Interrupter

As the name implies, the Interrupter spends the duration of the training session interrupting you ... over and over and over again. Interrupters act as if they are the only students enrolled in the class. You are there to answer all of their questions, listen to their suggestions and explain any topic as long as it takes them to understand, regardless of your plans for the session or the other students' needs. Just as you begin explaining how to do something, the Interrupter has a question about something completely unrelated. You ask the students to try it one way and the Interrupter wants to know why the class isn't doing it the way her children showed her. You ask the students a question and the Interrupter always shouts out the answer before anyone else has a chance to participate.

Interrupters, and Disruptors on the whole, try the patience of trainers more than any other group of students, as they monopolize class time and behave inconsiderately throughout the training session. Everyone misses out when an Interrupter takes a seat in your class.

- Direct questions to specific students so that everyone has a chance to participate.
- If the Interrupter is asking a question that doesn't fall within the scope of the class material, express regret that you simply don't have enough time to discuss it during the session. Suggest that the student review the class list and sign up for alternative courses.
- If the Interrupter has lots and lots of questions and you offer one-on-one training, suggest that the student take one-on-one training so that you will be better able to answer the student's questions.
- Announce at the beginning of class that the timetable is going to be tight and that, unfortunately, questions will need to be kept to a minimum. But do let students know that if they don't understand something, they should let you know.
- While the Interrupter is talking, subtly busy yourself with a task so that the student gets the message that you are moving on.

The Co-Pilot

The Co-Pilot thinks that he/she is knowledgeable enough to co-lead the course. You suggest students try one method; the co-pilot suggests another. You describe your qualifications; the co-pilot feels compelled to inform everyone of his/her skills and work history. Co-Pilots, also commonly referred to as Know-It-Alls, are often teachers or retired teachers. Being in the student's chair is not easy for them and they must let everyone know that they are just as skilled, if not more skilled, than the trainer.

Co-pilots are often very challenging students for trainers. It is difficult not to take their constant "suggestions" as "criticisms". The co-pilot's lack of self-awareness and self-control can prove very frustrating to the trainer, who is trying to lead the course but whose authority and knowledge is being challenged at every turn.

- Acknowledge the co-pilot's suggestions as excellent alternatives but that for simplicity's sake you would like everyone to complete the exercises together and in the same way.
- As a pre-emptive strategy, announce at the beginning of the class that even though there are many ways to perform most online tasks that you have chosen what you feel to be some of the easiest methods for using a computer. If students choose to use an alternative method outside of the classroom, that's perfectly fine and understandable.
- If the co-pilot actually has some helpful suggestions and seems more skilled than some of the other students, use him/her as a teaching assistant and sit him/her with students who need a little extra help.
- If the co-pilot interrupts time and time again, use some of the strategies listed above for the Interrupter, the last resort being a private discussion where you discuss the problematic behaviour with the student (ensure that you begin the discussion by expressing gratitude for the co-pilot's input).
- if possible, try to use the co-pilots in your class to your advantage. It is better to keep them happy instead of alienating them.

[Continue to Part II >>](#)

References

Dealing with Monopolizing, Distracting and Withdrawing Behaviours. The Center for Teaching Excellence <<http://www.lcc.edu/cte/resources/teachingettes/monopolizingstudents.html>>
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Featured Article

Disruptive Learners Part II: The Class Clown & Chatterbox

The Difficult Student

Disruptive Learners Part II: The Class Clown & Chatterbox

Disruptive learners interrupt the flow of the class and distract both the instructor and other students. There are four main types of disruptive learners: the Interrupter, the Co-pilot, the Class Clown and the Chatterbox.

The Class Clown

Although the Class Clown may seem like a likeable kind of guy compared to the Interrupter and Co-Pilot, the Clown's behaviour ends up causing the same results: interruption and distraction. Oftentimes, the Class Clown lightens the mood early on in the class with funny remarks and amusing anecdotes. As such, the Class Clown can be a helpful resource to the trainer.

Unfortunately, most Clowns get a rush from amusing others and pretty soon the occasional joke turns into a joke every 3 to 5 minutes. The trainer gives a little chuckle and tries to continue on, but the flow of the lesson is lost. Some students reply to the Clown's comments, resulting in an even greater distraction; other students become frustrated as they keep losing their places in the lesson. The trainer becomes very frustrated as he or she is unable to complete the full lesson on time.

- Stop talking and wait until the Clown stops talking/laughing ... and then wait a couple more seconds after that. The brief but slightly awkward moment of silence will bring attention to the fact that there has been an interruption and, hopefully, the Clown will realize this and hold his or her tongue.
- Stand near the Clown so that he or she feels a little pressure to focus and work on the task at hand.
- If necessary, approach the student after class and discreetly ask if he or she would mind making a few less jokes during class lectures and discussion. Let the Clown know that you enjoy his/her presence in the class and that you appreciate the atmosphere the light-heartedness and great sense of humour creates, but if he or she could tone it down just a little that would be great as the class is falling slightly behind.

The Chatterbox

The Chatterbox is very similar to the Class Clown, except the Chatterbox generally spends the entire class talking to his or her neighbour, who may be a friend or acquaintance. Whereas the Class Clown disrupts the class occasionally, the Chatterbox may disrupt the class for the entire session!

Use the same techniques as listed above for the Class Clown. In addition, you may want to give the Chatterbox an occasional pointed but friendly look or stare. Don't be rude, but make sure he or she makes eye contact with you and then continue on with what you were saying.

References

Dealing with Monopolizing, Distracting and Withdrawing Behaviours. The Center for Teaching Excellence <<http://www.lcc.edu/cte/resources/teachingettes/monopolizingstudents.html>>
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Featured Article

Distracted Learners

[The Difficult Student](#)

Distracted Learners

Distracted Learners seem unable to focus and concentrate. Their attention may always be elsewhere and, as a trainer, you can't help but wonder why they even signed up for training. It's as if they are being forced to show up, but that is obviously not the case. How do you handle a student who acts as if they want to be somewhere else? Well, patiently...

The Reluctant Learner

The Reluctant Learner is a rare kind of learner. After all, most students are there to learn, right? But for some reason, the Reluctant Learner behaves as if the trainer is forcing him or her to follow along and complete any exercises. When you ask the class to work on an exercise the reluctant learner might actually groan or sigh out loud. He/she might even exclaim, "What? Now?"

The trainer is usually caught by surprise and will respond with a tort but confused, "Yes. Now please." Although this is a natural and common reaction, it is not the best way to handle the student. The student will only get louder and complain more, convinced that you are too demanding. You will probably need to handle this student with kid gloves.

- Don't take it personally and try to keep your sense of humour about you. This behaviour is so strange that it cannot possibly be caused solely by you.
- Respond patiently and politely, "Yes, I think it would be best if we worked on it right now. But if you feel you need a break, just complete as much as you can." If the student still seems resistant, let him or her know that it is really his or her decision whether or not they complete the exercise.
- If this student is registered for several courses and displays the same behaviour in every class, take him or her aside and discreetly explain that the training program requires students to participate during class and if this is a problem perhaps he/she should reduce the number of sessions he/she attends.
- As a pre-emptive strategy, place a notice on your flyers and brochures informing students that they will be required to participate and complete exercises during training sessions. This may weed out any potential students who don't want to "work."

The Inattentive Nodder

The Inattentive Nodder actually appears to be an eager, attentive student. They make eye contact often and keep nodding as if they understand exactly what you are saying. They may even give you winks or big smiles as if they are in it together with you, kindred computer geeks! But, then, you walk up behind them and notice that they are three or four steps back or they are in the wrong place altogether and they have obviously not been following along! It is obvious the student is not learning the material, but insists upon "acting" as if he/she is. Why would someone do this? Isn't this a waste of their time? Why not just ask for assistance? These are questions best put to psychology majors. As a trainer, you just need to get them to stop "acting" and to start learning. :-)

- As with the disruptive learners, stand near or behind theses learners as the class is working on exercises to ensure that they are following along.
- If you've been smiling back and enjoying the attention, direct your attention to other students and send the message that you are serious about teaching the material. Remain friendly and helpful, but don't encourage the sense of "camaraderie" that the Nodder seems to enjoy so much.

The Surfer

The Surfer is unique to the computer training experience. While the trainer is giving the lessons, handing out exercises and generally leading students through the course material, Surfers are surfing online. They are visiting Google, checking their email and scanning about 5 to 10 open browser windows on their desktop. Every time the trainer approaches the student, he/she seems lost and has not heard the instructions, unable to keep up. They obviously are not surfing because they are so well versed in the subject that they don't need to pay attention. So, why are they causing themselves - and you - so much difficulty? The answer to that question probably varies. Worry less about *why* they are doing it (this will probably always remain a mystery to most of us) and focus on trying to *fix* the problem instead.

- As with the disruptive learners, stand near or behind the learner as the class is working on exercises.
- Announce at the beginning of the course that due to the time constraints students will not be able to check their email accounts or surf online and that if they would like to do that they can make an appointment to reserve one of the computers at a later date. This should discourage anyone tempted to "play" during the training session.
- If you walk up to the learner and see that they have multiple windows open, act as if the computer must be on the blink (i.e. "Gosh! This computer must have a bug on it. Can I get you to just close every window except the one we're working on? Thanks!"). The student gets to save face and you get a focused student. NOTE: You may have to do this several times.

Featured Article

Using the Difficult Student Worksheet

[The Difficult Student](#)

Using the Difficult Student Worksheet

More than just knowing what "type" of difficult student(s) you may encounter and learning some strategies for dealing with the troublesome behaviour, you will also need to apply some of these newly learned approaches during your classes.

Use the Difficult Student Worksheet (see next two pages) to help you work through the difficult situation. The worksheet is broken down into four parts. Read below for a brief explanation for each part.

Part I: The Student's Behaviour and You

Before you decide to implement any new strategies for dealing with that difficult student, it may be a good idea to analyze your own responses and reactions to the student's actions and/or attitude. Is the student really exhibiting an impossible behaviour, or does it provoke an inappropriate reaction in you?

For instance, perhaps one of your students is constantly offering suggestions to your instructions. You find this frustrating as it feels as if the student is correcting you and not respecting your role as the instructor. You may become angry. Another instructor, however, may find the behaviour helpful and call upon the student to be a trainer's aide.

Is the behaviour inherently difficult, then, or is it your "judgement" of the behaviour that causes the problem? Honestly, it is probably a little of both. But one solution to the problem is to not let the student's behaviour bother you any longer and to refuse to take it personally. This may not seem practical to you, but it is still a possible solution.

Answer the questions in this section of the worksheet to describe the student's actual behaviour as well as your opinion of and reaction to it.

Part II: Understanding the Student's Behaviour

Oftentimes, a difficult student's behaviour is a result of some sort of frustration on the part of the student. Perhaps the student has difficulty understanding the English language; maybe the student is having trouble keeping up with the rest of the class and is beginning to feel self-conscious, projecting his or her insecurity onto you and the course material; the student may even have had greater expectations of the course and feel let down. None of these problems are your "fault." But, the student is usually expressing his or her frustration over your inability to meet his or her needs.

Answer the questions in this section of the worksheet to see if you can pinpoint the student's needs and whether or not you can meet those needs. Try and put yourself in the student's shoes and find a more empathetic way to view the situation.

Part III: Responding to the Behaviour

Now that you have analyzed the student's behaviour, described your response to it and determined your student's unmet needs, now you will need to come up with some alternative ways to respond to the situation.

Using the articles in [The Difficult Student](#) section of this website, write down some possible ways you could respond to the behaviour the next time you encounter it.

Part IV: Monitoring the Situation

After you have come up with some alternative solutions, pick one and use it the next time you encounter the difficult student or behaviour. After you have practiced your new response, return to the worksheet and determine whether or not the new response improved the situation. Decide if you will try another response and/or approach someone else for help.

[Continue to Difficult Student Worksheet >>](#)

Featured Article

The Difficult Student Worksheet: Understanding the Behaviour

[The Difficult Student](#)

The Difficult Student Worksheet: Understanding the Behaviour

Use the following questions to assist in coming up with your own ways of coping with the difficult students you encounter.

PART ONE: The Difficult Student's Behaviour and You

Difficult Student Type: _____

What is the student actually doing?

What is your opinion of this behaviour?

How does the behaviour (and your opinion of it) make you *feel*?

How do you typically respond to this behaviour?

PART TWO: Understanding the Student's Behaviour

What are the student's needs?

Are you meeting his/her needs? _____ Can you meet his/her needs? _____

Is there a more empathetic way to perceive or understand this behaviour?

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Featured Article

The Difficult Student Worksheet: Responding to the Behaviour

[The Difficult Student](#)

The Difficult Student Worksheet: Responding to the Behaviour

PART THREE: Responding to the Behaviour

Now that you have a greater understanding of the difficult student's motivation, think of some possible ways that you can respond to their behaviour in the future.

Possible Response #1

Possible Response #2

PART FOUR: Monitoring the Situation

In order to become more aware of the effects your own behaviour has on others, monitor the situation by asking yourself the following questions ***after you have implemented one of the possible solutions above.***

How did you decide to respond to the difficult behaviour/situation this time?

Did your "new" response resolve the problem/conflict? _____

Why or why not?

How can you better respond next time?

Do you need help resolving this issue? _____

Who can you ask for help?
